

Augustana College
Chapel of Reconciliation

Be Still and Know that I am God

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Life is a lot like weather. There are bright, sunny days and dark, stormy days. On the dark, stormy days, we start to feel like we are swamped, like we're drowning. This is exactly how I felt last October when I was diagnosed with cancer. The words, "Ashley, you have cancer" felt like waves coming over me. I felt like I was drowning.

It's not always easy to feel God's presence during difficult times. It is often easy to forget that He is always with us. In Mark 4, verse 10 of our scripture today, Jesus asked the disciples, "Why are you so afraid?" We fear because we are human. We fear because we do not like the unknown. We fear the uncertainty.

The amazing thing about believing in God, though, is knowing that He is God and we don't have to be! God is our refuge and strength; he is always there for us. Psalm 46 is a wonderful illustration of how we, as humans, feel about the storms in life. Sometimes our world feels like it is going to give away, like we are falling apart. In this Psalm, though, God reminds us, "Be still, and know that I am God."

God is in control. Not you ...not me ...God is in control. He has a plan for each and every one of us. He will see us through life's storms and give us strength to face each day.

The interesting thing about storms is that they can leave such a huge impact on our lives. We always remember the big storms. We remember Hurricane Katrina or

some of the devastating tornadoes that have ripped through the Midwest. We never expected these storms and we will never forget them.

In my life, cancer has been that storm. It has been the storm that I will never forget. I have been surrounded by the love and support of family and friends for the past six months. Standing before you all today, looking at each of your faces and realizing the ways you have touched my life during this journey, I am overwhelmed with thanks. I thank God every day for you. As I wrote in my Caringbridge journal on Monday, “My strength, courage, and hope come from our Lord, who has worked through each of you to be a light in my life.”

I have been asked many times what the hardest thing has been about my journey with cancer. Most people would think it was being diagnosed, going through treatment, or losing my hair. Something that most people don't realize is that one of the most difficult things about going through a “storm” like cancer is the stillness, the quiet moments when it is just you and God.

I realized how hard this stillness could be very early on in my journey with cancer. Lying down at night I would think about how my life had changed. I wondered what the future might hold. I don't know many people that enjoy that kind of true silence. Yes, we all enjoy a little rest and relaxation every once in a while. Most of us are looking forward to getting some rest after finals are finished in a few weeks. But how often are we truly still?

Like the majority of us, I am guilty of never slowing down and always being busy. I'm always looking forward to the next thing on my “to-do” list. It is hard to slow down and be truly still. All of our fears and anxieties come to us in the stillness and

overwhelm us. The strange thing, though, is that it sometimes takes a storm in our life to slow us down. It takes a storm to bring us back into the stillness, into a quiet place, so that we can be reminded that God is in control. “Be still and know that I am God.”

I thought that once I was finished with treatment and done fighting cancer that my life would go back to normal. I thought that if the storm in my life moved away I would feel at ease. This past Monday night in the stillness of my theme house bedroom, I realized that even though my storm has passed, my human fears have not gone anywhere. Like I said before, we remember the big storms. When the stillness comes and the storm has passed, you wonder if it is really over. Has the storm passed or is this only the eye of the storm?

Monday night, I realized that I was scared to stop fighting. What If there is more? What if the cancer comes back? What if this storm is gone but another storm is on its way? I am only human and I know that I will never stop asking, “What if ..?” I know that I will never stop worrying. But today, in front of all of you, I am ready to take the next step forward and trust God.

(At this point in the sermon, I took off my bright-colored knit cap to reveal, for the first time in six months, my hair that was just beginning to grow back.)

God is in control. We do not need to ask, “What if..?” We do not need to worry. God is with you, has a plan for you, and will give you the strength and courage that you need to face all of life’s storms. Be still, fellow brothers and sisters in Christ, and know that He is God!

Let’s pray ... God of stillness and creative action, help us to find space for quietness today that we may live creatively and discover the inner meaning of silence.

Send peace and joy to each quiet place, to all who are waiting and listening. May your voice be heard in the stillness so that all who believe in you will know that you are in control. In your name we pray, Amen.

I want to thank the Augustana community for the love and support they have give to me this year! You have blessed my life in ways too numerous to mention, and, for that, I thank God for you! - Ashley

CAMPUS MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALLING ALL LUTHERAN CAMP COUNSELORS!! - The Admission Office and the Office of Church Relations would like to present an Augie sweatshirt and cap to all returning Augie students who are working at a Lutheran Camp this summer. **There will be a commissioning service on May 11th** where the gifts will be presented. Please sign up on the form on the Narthex table or let Carol in the chapel office know.

BIBLE STUDY - Commons Lounge, Mondays, 6 pm. Everyone is welcome!! The last meeting is Mon., May 11th.

MIDNIGHT MADNESS - Our Saviors's Luth. is once again hosting a finals week event on **Sun., May 17th and Monday, May 18th**. Study space and munchies will be available from 6:00 pm - 1 am. A meal will be served each night at 10:30. Study space will be a bit more limited this year due to the construction. Finals don't have to be a drag! Cross the street and be good to yourself!!!

CHAPEL SCHEDULE

Sunday (10 th)	Worship, 11 am - Pr. Paul
Monday (11 th)	Worship, 10 am - Pr. Paul; camp counselor commissioning
Tuesday (12 th)	Koinonia, 10 am
Wednesday (13 th)	Holy Communion, 10 am - Pr. Lori Hope, St. Mark's Luth.
Friday (15 th)	Worship, 10 am - ASA Inauguration
Sunday (17 th)	Worship, 11 am - Pr. Paul